

# THE ANNALS

AND

## MAGAZINE OF NATURAL HISTORY.

[FIFTH SERIES.]

No. 114. JUNE 1887.

---

LI.—*Description of a second Species of Rabbit-Bandicoot* (Peragale). By OLDFIELD THOMAS, Natural-History Museum.

AMONG a small collection of Mammals obtained by the Natural-History Museum from Mr. J. Beazley, of Adelaide, occurs a specimen clearly representing a new species of the interesting genus *Peragale*, of which the only hitherto described species was the well-known Rabbit-Bandicoot (*P. lagotis*) of Western and Southern Australia. The exact locality of the specimen has unfortunately not been recorded; but the other specimens in the collection belong either to North Australian species or to such as may have been obtained in the neighbourhood of Adelaide itself.

The type specimen, happily well preserved in spirit, is a male, young enough to have its milk premolar (m. pm.<sup>4</sup>) still in position, but yet showing, despite its youth, such striking characters as to separate it at once from *P. lagotis*.

*Peragale leucura*, sp. n.

Much smaller than *P. lagotis*. Proportions, lengths of ears, feet, and tail, and quality of fur quite as in that species. General colour pale yellowish fawn; the hairs of the back and

crown slaty grey at their bases, those of the muzzle, chin, chest, belly, limbs, and tail pure white or yellowish white to their roots. Naked rhinarium small, not running back along the top of the muzzle, as in *P. lagotis*. Ears, as usual, enormously long, laid forward they reach beyond the muzzle; evenly thinly clothed with very fine short silvery hairs, which form a delicate fringe round their edges; their substance yellowish flesh-colour, except for their posterior half terminally, where it is slaty grey. Fore limbs pure white, thickly hairy everywhere, except along the underside of the fingers; thumb and fifth finger clawless, as usual; second and third fingers subequal, fourth reaching to the middle of the terminal phalanx of the third, fifth reaching just beyond, and thumb just to the level of, the base of the fourth; a small round naked pad at the base of each of the digits except the thumb, much more distinctly defined than in *P. lagotis*. Hind limbs also pure white, without any black hairs along the sole; the latter completely hairy, except on the compound terminal projection, on which there are two small but distinct pads; fifth toe reaching to the end of the first phalanx of the fourth; united second and third to the base of the fourth. Tail thin and slender, *wholly white-haired*, the hairs quite short on the sides and below, but above forming a beautiful prominent white crest, increasing in length to the tip, where the hairs are more than 30 millim. in length.

Skull, so far as can be judged from so young a specimen, with all the essential characters of that of *P. lagotis*, except that the bullæ are more evenly hemispherical in their shape and not so prominently bulbous postero-externally.

Teeth very much smaller than those of *P. lagotis* (see dimensions), and showing that *P. leucura*, when full-grown, cannot be more than two thirds the size of *P. lagotis*. Upper incisors quite similar in shape to those of that animal; canines much straighter and slenderer, their antero-posterior diameter at 3 millim. from their tip only 1.6 millim. as compared to 2.3 in an immature specimen of *P. lagotis* with unworn teeth. Pm.<sup>1</sup> and pm.<sup>3</sup>\* shaped as in *P. lagotis*; milk premolar (m. pm.<sup>4</sup>) much smaller than in that species, its transverse diameter equal to, instead of only about half, its longitudinal diameter. Molars differing strikingly from those of *P. lagotis*, and showing a distinct approximation to those of *Perameles*

\* It has been shown elsewhere that the two anterior premolars of the Dasyiidae, and therefore probably of the other Polyprotodont Marsupials, are homologous with the first and third of the placental premolars, and should therefore be called pm.<sup>1</sup> and pm.<sup>3</sup> (Proc. Roy. Soc. 1887).

proper by their short multicuspidate crowns and by the much earlier period at which they form roots, the roots of the two anterior molars being already formed and closed up in the type specimen, young as it is, while in *P. lagotis* the crowns are very long and the roots do not close up until quite late in life.

Lower teeth differing, tooth by tooth, from those of *P. lagotis* exactly as do those in the upper jaw.

Dimensions of the type, a young male in spirit:—

Head and body 142 millim.; tail 116; hind foot 55; ear (above crown) 63.

Skull: basal length 45; greatest breadth 22·5; nasals, length 18, greatest breadth 4·5; interorbital breadth 10; palate, length 27·7.

Teeth, as compared to those of an immature specimen of *P. lagotis*:—

	<i>P. leucura.</i>		<i>P. lagotis.</i>	
	Upper.	Lower.	Upper.	Lower.
Incisor series, length . . . . .	5·4	3·9	8·4	5·8
Pm. <sup>1</sup> , horizontal length . . . . .	3·0	3·0	4·0	4·3
Pm. <sup>3</sup> , " " . . . . .	3·0	3·2	4·0	4·7
Milk pm. <sup>4</sup> , " " . . . . .	1·1	1·1	2·5	2·3
M. <sup>1</sup> and m. <sup>2</sup> , combined lengths	7·0	7·1	9·0	9·3

The occurrence of this second species of the remarkable genus *Peragale* is a matter of considerable interest, especially as the new form is a very prominent and handsome animal, and one that it is surprising has not been discovered before. It is much to be hoped that the true home of this beautiful species will soon be found out, and that the publication of its description will result in more specimens becoming available for scientific examination.

Judging by the pale colour of its fur it is evident that *P. leucura* is more distinctly an inhabitant of sandy country than *P. lagotis*, such a coloration being a well-known characteristic of desert animals; and we may therefore expect that the home of this species will be found to be the vast sandy plains of the interior, and, considering the history of the collection, probably those of the central or northern parts of the colony of South Australia.